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WASHINGTON STATE (GREEN BIRD)
6 JUNE 1978

Allies Agree to Back Zaire's Mobutu, But U.S. Balks at Wider Africa Pledge

Hill Chairmen: Turner Convinced Us

From News Services

Two House committee chairmen who received an administration briefing say they support the president's conclusion that Cubans helped train and equip rebels who invaded Zaire.

Rep. Edward P. Boland, chairman of the House Intelligence Committee and Rep. Clement J. Zablocki, chairman of the House International Relations Committee, said they were satisfied with yesterday's briefing by CIA Director Stansfield Turner.

Asked if Turner presented circumstantial evidence, Zablocki said, "No, it's more than that."

HOUSE SPEAKER Thomas P. O'Neill Jr. said Carter and Turner convinced him at a briefing Friday that they have proof of 35 incidents of Cuban participation in the invasion of Zaire's Shaba province.

"I would say they have pictures," O'Neill said in response to a question. "There are pictures that will identify Cuban leaders with the movement."

But O'Neill said he was not shown any pictures and Turner refused to comment on whether such photos exist.

Turner said a preponderance of evidence supports the conclusion that Cubans helped train the invaders.

"No intelligence conclusion is ever absolutely black and absolutely white," Turner told reporters after briefing the intelligence panel.

"But when you have a preponderance of evidence as we do in this case from a variety of sources over a period of time, one can only come to the kind of conclusion that we did," he said.

Secretary of Defense Harold Brown said Sunday that the evidence of Cuban participation came from prisoners, diplomatic channels and neighboring African countries.

Brown did not say the evidence includes photographs.

TURNER SAID yesterday that he has never said Cubans were involved in the invasion itself. But, he said, "we have sufficient evidence to draw the conclusion" that Cubans helped train and equip invading forces into Zaire.

He refused to say whether the evidence is circumstantial or direct or to characterize the sources in any way.

O'Neill said a Cuban emissary was sent to tell him recently that the Cubans were not involved in the invasion.

Boland, whose committee has oversight responsibility for the CIA and all covert operations, said after yesterday's appearance by Turner, "I'm satisfied and the committee itself is satisfied the president's statement is correct."

He was referring to Carter's charges that the Cubans and the Angolans bear a heavy responsibility for the May 13 invasion of Shaba province.

Boland said Turner presented evidence from "that the Angolans and Cubans were actually engaged in training, equipping and planning the invasion."

Turner did not use the word "planning" as Boland did.

When Boland was asked if the committee would support administration action to counter the Cuban activities, he replied:

"It would depend upon the circumstance. The entire Congress has to answer whether the administration is hampered."

Administration officials who have seen the classified evidence describe it as "substantial, but mainly circumstantial."

One official said it involved such things as foreigners being seen with the Katanga units, and another said, "much of the evidence is indirect, but there is so much of it over such a long period of time that it adds up to quite a hefty ball of wax."

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